

- Welcome to Ability Radio, You and Your Health, a health literacy program funded by VI Lottery, broadcasting from Da Vybe Radio Station 107.9. My name is Amelia Headley LaMont and I am joined today by Iris Bermudez. Iris, good morning.

- Good morning. Welcome...

- How you doing?

- I'm fine. Welcome back.

- Thank you. I should be welcoming you back. Have you had a good summer so far?

- It's been great, thank you.

- Great, great, great. Well, we have a very special guest today. But before we get into who our special guest is, a few rules of engagement so to speak. First of all, we request that there be no use of names, no personal text or unfounded allegations, no profanity, and we don't give medical advice, so we won't be able to respond to questions of that sort. And the opinions are, expressed in this program are those of, or I should say not those of Disability Rights Center of the Virgin Islands but they are exclusively those of our guest. This is a live-calling show and if you are so inclined we encourage you to give us a call at 779-1079 or 713-1079. I am very pleased to welcome today a dear, dear friend who I've known for many years and a member of our organization, and a founding member, I should say, of, one of the founding members of the Women's Coalition of St. Croix, Dr. Gloria I. Joseph. Dr. Joseph, good morning.

- Good morning.

- How are you?

- Well, having survived a night of tremendous thunder, I should say that I am lucky to be alive.

- You're here.

- Yes, I am.

- Dr. Joseph is a renowned scholar, activist, she's a published author, and educator. She earned her bachelors from New York University, her masters from the City College of New York, and a PhD from Cornell University. She is a professor emeritus of Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts and she's had 30 plus years in academia including an alternate, an alternative school, teaching on secondary, college, and university levels, served as a reading specialist, guidance counselor, and school psychologist both in the United States and Europe. She's lectured throughout the world. Her experiences culminated into a unique worldview and perspective that is reflected in her literary works. One book particular is called Hell Under God's Orders which talked about the experience of many of us after Hurricane Hugo and her latest book is called The Wind is Spirit. So, and actually I know of this book before I even met Dr. Joseph, it was called Conflicts in Black and White Feminist Perspectives. So, wow, we are, we are graced by a woman with tremendous experience and history, and our topic was a topic that Dr. Joseph had mentioned when we met...

- Yes. Met with her.

- Right. And so the topic today is what do we mean, what does good health mean? What does it mean to be healthy? So, I will pass the baton to Dr. Joseph for a start and then we can kick off on some discussion on that. What does it mean?

- Okay. Thank you, Amelia, for the introduction. In preparation for this session today, I did a little survey in terms of speaking to a range of people and asking them the simple question, "Are you healthy?" Well, the responses range from, one person said, "I get up every morning, I eat, I dress, I go to work, so I must be

healthy." Another one said, "What do you mean? There's mental health, there's physical health, there's emotional health. So just what type of, you know, all these you put them together and overall some good, some are not so good, but overall I would say, yes." And the third range was, "How can anyone be healthy in this island with the pollutions, Sahara dust floating around, children can't go to school with pipes breaking with odors coming up and sewage running. How can you call yourself healthy in these Virgin Islands?" So those were the range of answers and in actuality all three answers that I gave you are true. It depends on the individual's experiences that the people have and their worldview. It also leaves the conclusion that health is relative, plus it could be also a question of mind over matter. We can raise the quest, let's talk about one of the responses in terms of how can you be healthy in this, in this, in the Virgin Islands. Well, we look at the statistics or definition of health meaning, you know, free from injury or disease, or health problems. If you look at, and consider that definition then I would say more than half of the Virgin Islands population is not healthy due to the high rate of high blood pressure and sugar diabetes.

- Uh-hmm.

- Yeah.

- So I would look, in the following discussion, I think we have to look at what is health in terms of, in spite of our injuries, our diseases, our impairments, how do we manage to function and is that functioning what we could call a healthy person.

- Healthy, functional.

- So that's where, I think, we should begin.

- Okay. So environment, let's say you are in a very externally toxic environment, how does one manage that and stay, "healthy"?

- Okay. That brings in the question of race and class. Whenever I'm involved on any discussion, I think that it is impaired unless you include the variables of race, class, and sex also. So if we look at the environment what type of environments are we talking about? We could look at Michigan where that water was poisoned. They, the city officials, they knew it. It's still being poisoned.

- Right.

- Even with the filters. The, one specialist informed the people, "Even with the filters do not drink that water."

- Right.

- Now that would not happen in Shaker Heights which is a very expensive, exclusive city in Ohio.

- Right.

- It wouldn't happen in a place like Bronxville, another exclusive place in New York City. So this is what I mean by class. And if you look at these situations, most of the times they are people of color who are experiencing this. It's the non-coloreds who are in charge and they are responsible and that's where the deep-seated racism comes in. So back to your initial question [inaudible]

- So health is political, I mean...

- Absolutely.

- Yeah.

- It's, absolutely. So, you know, and what it means is the people have to take the action in order to bring about these changes. You can look at the food that comes into different sections, different populations and here again, you look at the inner cities, you go through some of the stores, you see meat with green on it, molding, rotten vegetables, and even here in our own lovely paradise. Frequently I have gone into stores and said, "How can you sell these rotten bananas for 99 cents a pound?"

- Uh-hmm.

- Yes.

- And these are things what I mean by when I say the people have to react, rebel against those situations if they wanna bring about a change because we all know the value of nutrition and how much, the importance of eating what we say good food, healthy food. Then again, a whole question of what do we mean by healthy foods.

- Uh-hmm.

- How are they, what are they doing to the products in order to increase this, for example, specifically, what they're doing with chickens. Someone, in order to increase the breast, chicken breast for example, they had a [inaudible] with supposed to be a chicken, but all you saw were the breast and feet because they're trying so hard to...

- Oh, jeez.

- ...you know, greed is behind it all, to increase the amount of meat on the chicken and they're feeding them, you know, the chemicals that are used, are they harmful to the people? We could think back again to one time in Puerto Rico, the young girls were being, their fertility was being invaded because they were trying out different types of chemicals in the chicken and it was affecting the young girls.

- Uh-hmm.

- So back again, you know, it's always a question of race and, race, class, and sex. So you have to look at the different population and the areas and what means are available in order for you to take some actions to bring about some measure of correction and what it's being done to those persons who are located in those areas.

- Uh-hmm. You raised a really good point, Dr. Joseph, because I think that sometimes we just kind of ignore it, put it aside, "Oh, well, whoever is, I'm, they're still gonna buy it anyway so why complain." And even though we have a division here under Licensing and Consumer Services, that we should be reporting all these infractions because, like you said, I've been to stores and we, I have seen a lot of meats that were like molding, greenish, and even cereals. I remember going to a store in Puerto Rico and I bought a box of cereal and I didn't bother looking at the expiration date, and when I opened it, a whole bunch of flies came out. I said, "What the heck is this?"

- Uh-hmm.

- But I think we're ready for a station break.

- We'll be right back. Were back, good morning. You're listening to Ability Radio, You and Your Health. I'm joined by Iris Bermudez and our special guest today is Dr. Gloria I. Joseph on the topic of, what does it mean to be healthy? Is it a number on a scale, a blood pressure score, jean size, a body free of disease, or something else? And, Dr. Joseph, we were talking about how race, and ethnicity, and gender, and environment, how these all come into play as to trying to live a healthy life. Okay. And can you elaborate a little bit more on that? I mean, how, as a community, what are we experiencing? How can we engage, how can we improve our state of affairs with respect to health, wellness, and alike?

- Okay. Let me begin with the quote that we all are familiar is, "You are what you eat," well, here we go again. What determines what we eat? What's available plus the cost, and those two feed right again into class and what's available, and the environment and the location that you are. Now all parents, everyone wants their children to have good nutrition, however, given, you know, the status of the person, the amount of money they had and what's available, all that plays into how healthy you can, how healthy will your children be given the circumstances. So, you have to really, you know, do the best, of course, we say do the best with what you have, but we shouldn't stop there.

- Uh-hmm.

- What does it mean to do the, to do the best? And that would involve speaking out, doing some protesting, you know, making some demands, looking at the environment, and, for example, the mildew in the schools. We all know mildew is not good for people. Why are those schools allowed to have mildew year after year, year after year? Now I'm not going to go on the air describing or organizing a protest against the school, the parents, what they should be doing, but seriously parents, you should really be more active in terms of the condition of these schools. Now, that's just one simple area that, you know, we can talk about, but you see, be, it goes beyond that. It goes to the heart of the matter in terms of, why are the schools in these areas in the condition they are in? But since they are in that condition and if the higher-ups aren't gonna do anything about it, then the individuals have to. Now, that's, the schools is one of the example. And also the food too because I heard recently something about having to ship food from one school to another for their lunch, these things shouldn't be.

- Hmm.

- You know.

- Uh-hmm.

- Here we are an island with intelligent people, educated people, but the political consciousness, I'm afraid sometime is a little lacking.

- Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

- Yeah.

- So, you know, you have to have that, the, a spirit. You know, one quote is, you know, "Change does not take place through meditation and prayer. It takes action." I'm not saying leave out meditation and prayer, but after you meditate and pray, get up and do something because that's the only you can bring about change. And if you want to raise, now if, of course, you wanna raise healthy children, you wanna be healthy yourself. So you must take those steps to bring about the necessary changes to improve the health in our specific environment.

- There was a wonderful quote that will stay with me that I read in a book that you recently published, the Bio/Anthology, the book being called *The Wind is Spirit*, and there was a quote that I, that will stick with me and it speaks to what you're just addressing now, "Your silence will not protect you."

- Oh, gosh.

- Yeah, that's a quote from Audre Lorde.

- Yes.

- Yes. Yeah. Because the full title is *The Wind is Spirit, The Life, Love, Life, Love, and Legacy of Audre Lorde*. That's the full title but we just call it *The Wind is Spirit*, and, yes, that's true. That quote was, is very, very important and a critical quote.

- Which speaks to, you know, we've just addressed, we're silent. We're not as engaged in improving yet. I'd like to say, "Yet," because we always wanna be optimistic. We're not as engaged in our, you know, handling our environment, making sure that we get things that are fresh.

- Uh-hmm.

- Uh-hmm.

- Non-toxic. I mean, what's regrettable is that if you have programs that give, you know, food stamp programs for example, TANF programs, where it's okay to buy sugary drinks and give it to your children.

- Defeating the purpose.

- Yeah, it is defeating the purpose. And then we wonder why we have the level of diabetes that we have and then, you know, so, I, you know, I see this being a nutrition education in addition to an environmental education.

- Uh-hmm.

- Right, right.

- Right [inaudible]

- That's what...

- And we also have to bring back more agriculturist.

- Oh, yes.

- Because I know that that's happening lately, but I think we need to bring more because we need to kind of go back to nature.

- Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

- You know, the food we're buying is polluted, basically, most of it is, a lot of it is, so I don't know what, but we need to go back to the naturalist and to sponsor them that are growing, and that are farming, and, you know.

- Uh-hmm. Speaking of the environment, I've been pondering this question for years now, past three or four years, so I wanna bring it up. I call it the four As, Alzheimer, AIDS, autism, and alcoholism.

- Hmm.

- Uh-hmm.

- Because they seemed, not seemed to be, they're pervading our country, the world I would say, and when you speak, look at the environment, the question I am pondering is to what extent does the environment play? And, for example, the increase in autism, it's unbelievable.

- Yeah.

- They have so many definitions, and then you think of the parents or caretakers who have to deal with this. Are provisions being made for them? Alzheimer's, I'm sure there's not a person in this audience who doesn't know or have some relative that has, is a victim of some form of dementia. Alcoholism is a disease that's been going on and on and on, and it continues to go on. AIDS, all we know about, A, the epidemic and it's, how is it being dealt with? The way I see it they're just, you know, making it "easier" to

live with these things instead of really dealing with the core question, you know. What is causing it? Is this, does it have something to do with the pollution in the air? Does the pharmaceutical companies, now, this may sound extreme but are the pharmaceutical companies keeping these diseases alive so they can make more money? Now, that may sound very radical, but in actuality [inaudible] little radical statements that you could make when you're talking about these type of situations and those who are in control.

- Uh-hmm.

- So, those are the four areas that I would like to spend a little time getting some input because I don't have the answer and I don't know who does, but I do know the, there's a situation and we have to start paying, oh, I don't wanna say more attention because we are paying attention to it, but we have, once again, let's delve into the causes and see just what steps are being taken other than medication, medication, medication. So, that's some area that I think we could spend a little time talking about.

- Right. You know, we, we've had a discussion last night about the passing of Pat Summitt and whether Alzheimer's was in and of itself a situation...

- [inaudible]

- ...that created it and I, my little quick Google search said, say that she did die of Alzheimer's which I never thought of Alzheimer's as a life-threatening illness.

- And she got it very, relatively young.

- Right. Right. Right.

- She was pretty young when she got it.

- Well, what I have learned about the, in terms of it contributing to death is on the, in the final stages of it, you see a person who can lose control of even swallowing, they can lose control of walking, they lose control of bodily functions that they need severe care, and as different parts of the brain deteriorate then you cannot, these organs don't function, so, now I'm not trying to give any medical explanation, but that's one of the explanations that seems reasonable that you could understand why.

- Right. Right.

- And that brings you in the question of, you know, of caregiving and caretaking in all of these diseases. You know, is it something in the air? Are we, is it the food we're producing? Just what is it? I know with autism, well, they start having a list of 26 different types.

- Right.

- But the bottom line is, how is the child affected, how are they being cared for, and how are the, are their families being assisted in caring and in the education? Are the schools available? Is money available to help with the caring of these people? So, these are, you know, political, governmental questions.

- Uh-hmm.

- You know.

- And we are not necessarily prepared. You know, there has been an influx of children with autism. Something we've seen in our office, Disability Rights Center, and, you know, our local Department of Education has tried to grapple with how to create education plans that, you know, are appropriate for, you know, youngsters with either autism or an autism spectrum disorder.

- Yeah.

- See, the word, when you spoke, the keyword to me was grapple.

- Right.

- The answers are there. There's no big question about it. You shouldn't have to grapple. You just have to put it into action. You know, there's no, why do you gotta grapple with the need, the care? You can find out what's, what cares are, what, what's required and then you have to go to the right places and make sure it's enacted, you know. And it's just, like, they're spending money for, thousands of dollars for the study and the answers, they know the results are there, so why are they gonna spend that kind of money, you know. So, and the same is true with the AIDS epidemic. You know, they just have a, you know, what they call the cocktail and more and more cocktails, what, is that really curing AIDS, you know? And alcoholism, we do have AA but I don't know how he measures the success.

- Right. How do you measure success in that regard?

- Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm. hmm.

- Well, is there anything at, are there any hope?

- Well...

- Are we doing anything right?

- I don't [inaudible] all the congressmen said, "Hope springs eternal," so, yeah. Oh, yes, there's hope and there are answers out there. It's just a question of action, getting people to do it, to do it, to do it. And you have to care. You know, you have to have a, you know, the hope [inaudible] of compassion, and caring, and concern, a humanitarian consideration, you know, a humanitarian responsibility for the world, for people, you know. And that can get [inaudible] sometimes is just missing, eradicate, we don't put enough focus on that. If you care about a person, you're not just gonna sit there and let these things go on and on, and on in order. For some instances you make money if the situation stays this way.

- Yeah.

- So you got greed, greed, greed as a, you know, and so it also serve a function of, you know, capitalism. Somebody has to be exploited.

- Might as well be us, huh?

- But I think the first step and the most important step is that we all have to get educated. You know, one medical condition is not the responsibility of one set of people, for example, the physicians and nurses. I think all of us have to say, "Well, you know what, I think enough is enough." Like Dr. Joseph has been saying, we all need to do something and it starts with educating ourselves in terms of what these conditions are, what can be done. Like she said, the answers are there, we just have to find them.

- Right.

- We have to get off our seats, for a lack of better word, and just start educating ourselves. For example, I just retired last year and I've been doing a lot of reading about retiring and aging, and most of the articles that I've been reading says aging is living. We have to live. It's not a death sentence unless you're very, very sick. But aging is for the living and we have to do that. We have to continue to live as if, you know, tomorrow is never gonna come.

- Right, right.

- You know, and I'm sure Dr. Joseph can explain that even better than I can, but that's what have been helping me, you know, with the retiring and the aging.

- Yeah. Right, right.

- But also it's basically a question of, "Okay, so we have the disease, diseases or we have an injury, but in spite of that, we have to go on living," you see. And I think that's a, that's a major question and something that we could talk about here.

- Okay.

- Because, you know, we got many people who have sugar diabetes and high blood pressure but they still lead a full active life.

- Right, right.

- You see. So that's something we need to focus on in spite of the injuries, in spite of, you know, you look at some of the children with severe physical disabilities but still they're out there, doing the best they can with what they have.

- Right.

- And we could call that a healthy lifestyle.

- Absolutely.

- Yeah. Yup.

- You see.

- We have a call. Let's hear who's joining us this morning. Good morning, you're on the air.

- Good morning.

- Hey.

- This is Archie.

- Good...

- Good morning, Dr. Joseph.

- Good morning.

- Good morning.

- How are you Archie?

- Oh, fine. Back in the saddle again.

- Well, welcome back.

- But Dr. Joseph brought up a good point, one regarding silence will not protect you.

- Yeah.

- But Dr. Joseph, I got an idea. I had a chance to visit old friends and travel and see different, from New Hampshire, The Maine, Denver, Ohio, and I came upon a different model of the education system. In Akron, Ohio, they had changed the name and approach for their school system. They call them now Community Learning Centers.

- Oh.

- Hmm.

- And in that approach, you gather in, a school is just not for that daytime area for children, but you open it up to the neighborhood community so that they can have, people can [inaudible] forums, have discussions, and make it so like a continuing legal, continue education for the entire community. And I was wondering, do you think Virgin Islands really needs to change the model of education? You brought up like caretakers for, what's going on with autism and dementia, but I'm finding that a lot of people don't know these issues and we need more dissemination of information for the entire community because all we see is, in the news, is killings and shootings.

- Yeah.

- But nothing about educating the population.

- Oh, absolutely. I agree with what you're saying entirely, absolutely, education is the key.

- Uh-hmm.

- You know, way back when Frederick Douglass said, you know, you keep, if you educate a man and the situation will definitely change. That's why the South is so dead set on keeping us black people uneducated. [inaudible] Iris has been saying, education is the key. You know, always learn to be so the, our public, yes, they need to be, the population here in St. Croix, all of us need to be educated in terms of what's available, what needs to be done, and how to do it, you see. So, you know, I can't say [inaudible] education is key. You know, you ask people, you know, what do they know about, you know, what is autism and what is, what do you know about AIDS, and you get some of the most, a wide range of answers which indicate that the core to the problem of identification is just not there, you know. So, absolutely, we need education and in terms of the structure of the education system here in St. Croix, not just in St. Croix, because one time I had an alternative school, that was called the Che Lumumba School for Truth [inaudible] how to start a alternative school with a budget of zero and we were very successful.

- Uh-hmm.

- This was when I was teaching at UMass, and the key to it was, to all the teachers there, was care and concern for the students, that was key, you see. And secondly, you know, you have to know your history. And you talk about changing the curriculum of the Virgin Islands, I would change the entire curriculum, you know. It could be, one, for example, let's build this curriculum, built around one word, respect.

- Uh-hmm.

- Respect for everyone. Respect for your parents, respect for your teachers, respect for one another. At the beginning of each class before the school starts, you talk about respect. At the end of the day you say, "Okay. How did you practice respect?" You know, they may sound simple but they're key and core practices that could have an effect. Secondly, you have to know your history. Well, look, well, look at that curriculum in the Virgin Islands, what do they tell you about the history of the Virgin Island? What do they tell you about slavery? What do they tell you about, you know, the relationship of colonies to the rest of the world? What do they tell you when you talk about democracy? What does democracy mean? Ask the children, I maintain that, I call it the three Cs. Too many children in the Virgin Islands don't know the difference between a country, a continent, and a city if you ask them the definitions. Really, it, you know, I've been in education over 30 years at all levels.

- Uh-hmm.

- And so I'm speaking from experience and from the wisdom that comes with age. Now these curriculums, absolutely, they need to be totally revised, totally revised. And, well, I don't want to go on and on, and to find this, what's wrong with this education system but the bottom line, it is not right, it is not progressive, it is not instilling in our students. Those principles that they need to enable them to face the world with a solid background of knowledge and political consciousness, and understanding of their place in the world.

- Well said. Well said. I, I'm hoping at some point, and I know Archie's off the phone now, but I'd be very interested in learning about, more about this Community Learning Center and just trying to get a sense of what this model would entail because we certainly, there's always room for improvement in as far as being able to, you know, convey a message and there's something to be said about that.

- Uh-hmm.

- We touched upon caregiving and I know Dr. Joseph you've had some considerable experience in being a caregiver. Is there something you could share with the audience as far as how it was for you?

- Well, the one thing I will is that you can't do it alone, don't try and go do it alone, with caregiving. And the second thing is you need education, information as to the exact procedures, what is helpful, what isn't helpful, and you have to, as I said, those of you who are caregivers and caretakers, seek the proper information and have a support group because it's so helpful to know that [inaudible] others in your similar situations, and just the different techniques that are very helpful. So I'm sure, I know we have groups here on St. Croix which is a very good thing. But if you are a caregiver or a caretaker, take advantage of that and spend some time learning and sharing your experiences because it's extremely helpful, very, very helpful.

- Uh-hmm.

- So that's a, that's a start and, because it's a, it's a, you know, I don't, it's a job that, you know, it has to come from the heart where you don't really consider it a task but it is a task and it can wear you down, so you do have to, when I say help, I do mean get some help, physical help.

- Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

- Shifts, other people assisting you, you know, sometimes it may be round, it may require round-the-clock care and that's when you have to maybe seek, you know, professional help.

- Right. Right. Right. You also touched upon something about, you know, not necessarily having a impairment or disease means that you don't have a quality of life. I like that reference. I think we typically assume that if you are in ill health, that you're not able to be out and about, or travel, or greet friends, or eat good food, or boogie down, you know, that...

- Yeah. People that are sick have a tendency of keeping to themselves or staying locked up in their home and not going out, or even going out on the porch getting fresh air or something, you know, it's like they are hibernating or something.

- And this is the kind of thing we were told very early on in our work when, you know, we would, you know, interview an individual and they would say, "I have a disability," and that was the beginning and the end of the conversation.

- Uh-hmm.

- "I have a disability therefore I cannot do work or I cannot..."

- Yes. Yes.

- ...you know, go to the beach, or visit with my family, or do anything because I have a disability," and I'm hoping with some, you know, education that that mindset is changing.

- Yeah. Yeah.

- Was, that used to be very prevalent in our line of work, you know.

- Uh-hmm. I would say the bottom line is you have to operate within the limits of your disabilities.

- Right.

- You see, that's the key thing. In some days you have up days, you have down days, when you have the up days, you know, utilize them.

- Right.

- And I'm sure, you know, your close friends and relatives, family, they can play an important role in helping to foster and show you up in certain areas, but the key is, you know, you operate your fullest extent within the limitations of your disabilities, you know. Some days, as you were saying, you feel like you could boogie down, other days you just wanna lie down and just, you know, look at the sky, and enjoy the environment if it's not too polluted or...

- Oh, jeez.

- But, you know, basically it's, you know, do the best you can with what you have, you know, and in this case, what you have has certain definitely, you know, limitations, but within those limitations, I know it's repetitive, but do what you can and, at any given day, you know, if you're going feel like going out, you feel like doing some cooking. And then when I say going out, that just brings the question of people, you know, the public. So the public should be, you know, has be educated in terms of their, really, a visible reaction to certain disabilities, you see.

- Right.

- And that's where we have to, once again, education comes in, you know. These are, these are human beings, you know, you have, you know, like I said before, humanitarian responsibility to all people, but again, and Amelia, you very well know this, how difficult it is to educate a public population in terms of people with disabilities.

- Uh-hmm.

- And, but, you know, sometimes the disabilities are not obvious, you may not realize that this person is a, has recovered from cancer, or is working with, you know, diabetes and sugar, and, you know, or, and other ailments, but these are the persons who have, you know, you see them, they're out there, they're being active, they're living their life to the fullest, and you may not even recognize it. So that, that's a mark of accomplishment, individuals who lead their lives that way, do as much as they can with what they have, you know, because they really are doing that much.

- Okay. Well, this has been very enlightening I must say and we are going to take a brief break, and we'll be back in a few moments. Yes, we can can this morning. Good morning, Virgin Islands. This is Ability Radio, You and Your Health. You are listening to Da Vybe, 107.9 and this program is brought to you by the VI Lottery, Making a Difference Program. I'm joined this morning by Iris Bermudez, a co-host, and our special guest is Dr. Gloria Joseph. Dr. Joseph, we had an interesting conversation during the break, there was some language that came from a group called mindbodygreen.com.

- Uh-hmm.

- And I'd like you to just refer to that because it speaks a certain intangibles I guess, but it's felt, deeply felt.

- Uh-hmm. Yes.

- What was that?

- Right. And I shall read the quote. Health begins in our insides and doesn't stop at our own skin. Our health, healthy or not, radiates beyond our skin into the world in the form of our own actions. There's that word again, actions. How we live not only affects our body, mind, and spirit but also the body, mind, and spirit of everyone we encounter.

- Right.

- Now that's a deep but very meaningful quote and one part of it says quite loud and clear, how you feel and act radiates outside of your skin, and touches and affects all those who are around you. It's sort of like having, you know, your, your, a good karma or a bad karma, and that is so critical in terms of your well-being, your health. It all relates back to health. In terms of the definition that we are using because, you know, we started out saying that the definition is, you know, is really relative and it depends a lot on who you are, where you live, and your, well, the class, excuse me, class and race and sex. But overall, no matter what, your health, your mind, and your body, and your spirit is the key determinant in how you face the world, how you affect others, and how others are affected by you. So you have to be, you know, it's very critical that you are aware of this. Every time you open your mouth, every time you look at a person who's disabled and, you know, maybe snicker or make some prejudice biased comment, you know, this is not only affecting the people that you're directing this to, it's affecting you because it's coming out of your mind, body, and soul.

- Right.

- So you have to, it's easy to say be aware of it but it's necessary to be aware of that because all that is gonna, you know, it generates from you. If it's positive, it generates to other and it goes on and on and on. And believe you me, it's gonna, it will contribute overall to the general well-being of people all over. Now those, you know, words may come relatively easy but to put them into practice is always a difficult part. It's always very difficult. You know, nowadays a lot has been, attention is being played out [inaudible] spirituality and what it means, and how it affects people, and how we, you know, are living with it. Well, I'm glad that's happening because it makes people stop and think, you know, "Why are we here? What's our purpose in life?" you know. And that's something you should ask yourselves. What is my purpose in life? And we all have a philosophy of life whether we realize it or not, but we just have, taking the time to sit down and write it out or really think about it. But ask yourself, you know, what is my philosophy of life? You have one. It determines how you act. It determines how you, you know, behave. It determines your, you know, your compassion. It determines those areas where you feel that you must take an action and do something, do something about. Now, excuse me, as I said before, you know, meditation, that's fine, you know. Prayer, absolutely. But all that, it determines, you know, the prayer and the meditation [inaudible] it's going to be interpreted and actualized in your everyday life.

- Uh-hmm.

- I have an interesting view of this and, you know, if, balancing, or comparing life in the Virgin Islands versus when you go to Continental US or probably other industrialized areas, how people interact with each other or don't.

- Uh-hmm. Or don't.

- They're either looking at their cell phones, or their screens, or, you know, the notion of neighborliness seems to be eroding and...

- Especially [inaudible]

- ...that's something that is of some concern, I'm, you know, I moved to the Virgin Islands in 1982 and I see a difference in how the community has changed as a result of, you know, colonialism, let's just call it what it is, and just the culture, a change in the culture, and there are some things that I see that we're still thankfully holding on to, but the respect pieces has eroded considerably.

- Uh-hmm.

- I'm struck by how many of the schools are interested in the topic of bullying and cyber-bullying. That seems to be a number one request which is a little worrisome to me. But on the other hand, I remember somebody who worked at our office many years ago who said, who did training in the schools and he said, "Children in the Virgin Islands are so polite."

- Hmm.

- Yes.

- "They still greet each other with a good morning and good afternoon, and"...

- When was this?

- Yeah. It was a few years back admittedly. Yeah, a few years back. But that's something I hope we don't lose. We can't, you know.

- Well, we, we're gonna lose it if we don't practice it.

- Right.

- Yeah.

- Because, you know, in sociology, you know, there's no such thing as a plateau if you don't, if you're not active, you go backwards. So just being active keeps it at a level where it's not going backwards, you know.

- Right.

- But this whole business of it, you're saying, you know, be, you know, polite, that's what I was referring to earlier about having, you know, respect, respect, using some respect. And let's see, there's, what else, something else you said Amelia that rang a bell. Oh, children's reaction to each other and bullying.

- Uh-hmm.

- And also the whole question of, you know, is a person healthy when they commit, you know, domestic violence, those acts of violence? Is that, you know, that should, that's part of being healthy in my opinion.

- Right.

- You know, so, you know, it's something we can look at. You know, we, you can have restraining orders but is that doing anything in terms of changing the individual's feelings towards his behavior, you know? So all that is, to me, is part of a healthy being, you know.

- Uh-hmm. Uh-hmm.

- Of course, you know, in the beginning we talked about the range of definitions and one of them was, you know, the mental emotional health. Well, are you emotionally and mentally healthy when you can beat upon a woman or your children?

- Right. Right.

- So that, this, when we talk about health, we're talking about the lifestyle, the very being of an individual.

- Yeah.

- You know, so, you know, go back to beginning, what is health? Health is, you know, the way in which you, you know, act in terms of your emotions, your mental health, your physical health, and your psychological health because all these, you know, you need to have a well-being in all those areas, in all those areas. Now, I know we're, this morning we've covered a lot of areas, but they're necessary because they all are part of health and they shouldn't, it shouldn't just be a question of our saying it.

- Right.

- I hope the listening audience will, you know, at least grab hold of one of the principles we've mentioned and work on that. And just doing that is a big step in the direction towards community health, community mental health, individual mental health. So let me take a breath here and see if you have any questions.

- I was thinking about what you were saying when you were talking about, you know, domestic violence. I know you are one of the founding members of the domestic violence organization...

- Uh-hmm. Correct.

- ...here in the Virgin Islands on St. Croix particularly. And I was just wondering if you're still a member, active member of the organization and what are you saying in terms of, you know, the husband-wife abuse, sexual abuse? I recall reading, this week as a matter of fact, how a mother, a mother killed her two daughters in the States. Yeah. And she had mental problems that weren't really, I guess weren't being addressed. But domestic violence, I think it's like, and what you said about, you know, we have to make sure that we look at the whole health spectrum and that one of them is, you know, the, is a person perpetuated into violence, is he a healthy person?

- Uh-hmm.

- If you could say more about that because that's interesting.

- Yeah, what I, what I also find interesting is that the way the Women's, you know, Coalition began was the result of, I sponsored the first Women Writers Conference in the Virgin Islands and those four women writers were very well-known popular feminists. One is Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, Toni Cade Bambara, and Michelle Cliff. They were the four prominent speakers and it so happens that many of their, it was a three-day conference, and many of the sessions, domestic violence was a topic.

- Uh-hmm.

- In actuality, the very last night of the conference, the entire topics were domestic violence, domestic violence, and I clearly remember the excitement was so high and it was Prof. Roberta Knowles who said, "What are we gonna do with all this excitement?" And it was Audre Lorde who said, took out a paper and pencil and said, "Pass it around. Those of you who are interested, sign up and we can meet," and that's how it got started. We met the next week and thanks to Wally Williams, he let use the library, and we met and that's how it started. So you see, it's not coincidental that the Women's Coalition is dealing with domestic violence because it was the height of conversation about domestic violence that caused the organization to get started. So from that point on, then on to your next question, domestic violence, yes, it

always has to be dealt with, but we have to keep up with the current issues in our society. And one for example is bullying and the other is, now this whole business of transgender and the LGBT business, you know, you have to keep pace of what's happening in order to be effective because in each area that I mentioned, they are forms of violence, you see.

- Uh-hmm. Right.

- So you have to move with the times and take action with the times. You know, you, you've got to keep up with what's happening and be knowledgeable about it, and know the proper measures that are available to utilize...

- Right.

- ...in order to bring about some changes.

- We're gonna take a break and we'll be right back. We can work it out. Good morning, Virgin Islands. We are wrapping up our, this morning's segment of the Ability Radio show, You and Your Health, with Dr. Gloria I. Joseph and our co-host Iris Bermudez. Dr. Joseph, we, in summary, you talked about action.

- Uh-hmm.

- And I'd like to ask you to return to those original sentiments that you expressed at the top of the hour.

- Uh-hmm. Right. As I said, the range, there was quite a range in terms of one person thinking, "Oh, I get up every morning and I can dress myself, eat, and go to work, I must be healthy." And another one was a more philosophical and academic response in terms of, you know, mental health, emotional health, physical health. And the third one was very personal in terms of our environment and what the government is or isn't doing to protect it. So in actuality, all of these questions are, all of these responses answer the question, are you healthy? It's relative to begin with. It also depends on who you are, where you are, and the environment that you are living in, but it also means the responses to all those, the answers, quote, are the same. You have to recognize it, be aware of it, and take some action and do whatever you can to bring about the needed change. Yes, you can get up every morning and dress, eat, et cetera. But what is it that you're eating? Maybe you, you know, your nutrition should be considered. Yes, you can get dressed but how affordable are clothing in your area? In terms of the emotional, the physical, the mental, those are all very important and that's where it comes in when you have to, when I talk about a universal humanitarianism, a sense of that, you know. All these factors have to be in, be, taken into consideration and dealt with in terms of the definition of the, of the, that, those individuals who look at mental health that way, who look at health that way. And for the third answer, that, again, applies to everyone in the community. Look at the areas in our community that are unhealthy, just plain unhealthy, and that includes the food you have to buy, the air you breathe, and the conditions of the school that was mentioned, you see. So, all...

- Be engaged.

- ...these answers are critical and applicable to the need for change and action.

- Action. Thank you so much. Thank you so much. Thanks for listening and we'll see you next week. Dr. Joseph, thank you so much.

- Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

- You're more than welcome. I appreciate the opportunity.